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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2010

Media Highlights: General McChrystal on NTV; Obama in 2010: Op/Eds;
Secretary Clinton To Meet US Armenians; US-Turkey Model Partnership;
Erdogan Warnings on Iran, Israel and the Iraq Syndrome; Cyprus
Talks; Survey on Turkey's Orthodox Citizens; TV Spotlight

McChrystal: "Turkish Soldiers Are the Best Communicators with Afghan
People" (NTV)

In evening news cast on 1/11 and today, NTV gave prominent play to
their exclusive interview with General Stanley McChrystal, the
commander of ISAF and American forces in Afghanistan. General
McChrystal lauded the contribution of Turkish soldiers serving in
Afghanistan, saying, "The Turkish military has unique influence in
Afghanistan. They communicate with Afghan people very well and they
understand the environment. Their presence is important for the
coalition's success." On a question on the demand over Turkish
combat troops to Afghanistan, McChrystal said whether it be civilian
aid, development or military security, whatever Turkey does makes an
"effective and valuable" contribution in the region. The General
said about the changing Afghanistan policy under President Obama,
"One of the most important things we do is the protection and
respect of Afghan people, and minimization of civilian losses. We
must try to convince the Afghan people that we are here for them."

Obama in 2010: Commentaries on Yemen and Security

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak's correspondent Ali Akel reported on
1/11 that "The hope President Obama rendered to the Islamic world
during his inauguration ceremony is losing ground in the face of the
desperation in the Muslim world. Except for some partial
developments in Iraq, no progress was seen in Israel, Palestine and
Syria, and the White House is unclear about the strategies to be
followed regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan. Confusion over a
possible US intervention in Yemen makes the Muslim world 'clench its
fist' again. The Washington Administration conducts 'shivering'
policies regarding internal and foreign policies but maintains its
position on the issues of Iran's nuclear program and the closure of
Gitmo. President Obama had made a good kickstart on January 20 last
year, and the world responded by awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize.
Let's see if 'Mr Cool' will be able to defuse the dynamites which
had been placed under the Peace Prize."

In Islamist-oriented Zaman, Virginia Commonwealth University academic Dr Fahrettin Sumer wrote a guest column that noted: "It's in the benefit of all to prevent Yemen from falling into internal strife and instability. Therefore, it's important that the US and Western powers conduct their relations with Yemen by paying attention to the country's delicate balances. Besides fighting against terrorism, Yemen must be helped in its efforts for economic development and democratization. We hope that Obama, under constant criticism from Republicans for being soft on terror, will not be influenced to conduct Bush-style policies."

Clinton to Meet Armenians in US (Hurriyet Daily News)
Columnist Umit Enginsoy with Hurriyet Daily News reports that representatives of major Armenian-American groups are planning to hold talks with Secretary Clinton on the recent thaw between Turkey and Armenia. Enginsoy quotes Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) executive director Bryan Ardouny as saying that "Turkey continues its counterproductive actions with respect to normalizing relation with Armenia" and that a meeting planned for sometime in February would offer "an important opportunity to discuss the US administration's efforts to hold Turkey accountable."

US-Turkey Model Partnership: In "Roadmap for Model Partnership with the US" mainstream Aksam columnist Cigdem Toker reports that Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan chaired a meeting of government ministers and private sector representatives to discuss the necessary groundwork for implementation of the model partnership proposed by President Obama. The group saw US cabinet level focus on the partnership as positive and different from the earlier strategic partnership model. Foreign Trade Undersecretary Ahmet Yakici will

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chair a "model partnership team" with hopes for positive impact on industrial zone projects and military procurement.

In the Headlines

PM Erdogan Warnings: Israel Tensions Mount Today's media outlets widely cover PM Erdogan's press conference with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri on Monday, giving widespread play to his comments on Israel. All papers report that Erdogan confirmed he would not participate in the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos. Mainstream Vatan said PM Erdogan fiercely criticized Israel for its new attacks in Gaza where he said they used phosphorous bombs against civilians. According to Vatan, Erdogan rhetorically asked: "Israel bombed Gaza again. Why did you do this? Will you accuse them again for firing missiles? But there are no such happenings at the moment. Israel gives the message that it is the superpower of the region and uses disproportionate force and violates UN resolutions." CNN Turk reported that Israel described Erdogan's comments as "insolent scolding" in an MFA statement released late on 1/12. In the statement, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's defended its full right to protect its citizens from the missiles and terror of Hamas and Hezbollah and noted that "the Turks are the last who can preach morality to the State of Israel."

PM Erdogan Warning on Iran Gets Major Play
WashingtonTV and other online outlets were quick to report on Erdogan's comments late on 1/11 under the headline "Turkey Slams Western Pressure over Iran Nuclear Program." The online services noted that "Erdogan criticized major powers for pressuring Iran on its nuclear program while tolerating Israel's assumed nuclear arsenal" while also "blasting Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and air strikes in the Gaza Strip." Islamist Today's Zaman on line noted that Erdogan was "actually commenting on the Iranian nuclear issues" and that "Erdogan noted that Turkey was warning the Iranians against their bid for nuclear weapons."

The semi official wire service Anadolu Ajansi carried Erdogan's remarks as follows: "This is about peace in this region, this is what we are sensitive about. We stand against whoever and whatever threatens the regional peace. If you want to establish peace, you have to act together with peace seekers. Otherwise peace in the region cannot be achieved. Of course the region cannot bear a new Iraq Syndrome. We do not want to have this again in this region."

Arguments with Iran are about nuclear weapons. Our stance is clear on this matter. We do not approve any country in this region to go for nuclear weapons. We tell this to our Iranian friends and brothers as well. But at the same time, there are nuclear weapons in Israel too. Those who warn Iran do not make a similar warning to Israel. There is a problem here. On this issue, the permanent 5 have to be fair. They have to issue a similar warning to Israel. Because there are nuclear weapons there. Israel has never denied having nuclear weapons, on the contrary, Israel has acknowledged this. And they have used weapons of mass destruction, i.e. phosphorus bombs in Gaza. Nobody can argue that phosphorus bombs are not weapons of mass destruction. We have seen it, we lived through it. Thus we have a message to the voice of conscience, a message to the voice of humanity: we will be fair. Our approach to this region will be fair. If we don't act fairly, then the problem will not only hit [damage] this region but also it will spread out through other regions. Peace in the Middle East is peace for the entire world, and uneasiness in the Middle East is an uneasiness for the world. Therefore we attach great importance to Middle East peace." (US Embassy translation)

Commentary on Erdogan and Iran: Analyzing PM Erdogan's comments on Iran and Israel, "Government remains skeptical to the US approach on Iran" writes Murat Yetkin in liberal Radikal. In "Erdogan Warns the US About Iran" he says: "What PM Erdogan said was a disclosure of Ankara's position regarding tension with the Iran issue which is on the verge of escalating particularly after remarks by General

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Petreaus. When a US commander talks about bombing Iran which is located right between Iraq and Afghanistan, it is more serious than it seems. Erdogan considers Washington's approach as another Iraq syndrome like it is looking for an excuse to attack." Noting that Turkey remains the only NATO member who is skeptical about US approach to the Iran nuclear issue, the columnist concludes: "Turkey wants no nuclear weapons around itself and that covers not only Iran but Israel as well. Ankara is asking Washington to work on Iran nuclear issue by being fair and not causing any damage to the world peace by using force. Turkey strongly believes that a military option with Iran will lead to global problems."

Cypriot Leaders: "We Will Continue Negotiations Until the End" (Sabah)

All papers today report that the Cypriot leaders launched intensified talks under the shadow of the Greek Cypriot refusal of Turkish proposals. However, mainstream Sabah highlights that following nine hour meeting between Turkish Cypriot leader Talat and Greek Cypriot leader Hristofyas, the leaders stressed that none of the parties will run away from the negotiations and they will continue until the end. Hurriyet headline reads "The Summit Starts With Crisis Again", Liberal Radikal headline reads "All Hopes for Solution in Cyprus Depends on the Talks," Intellectual/Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines the talks as "Most Critical Talks Started in Cyprus" and reports that the talks has high importance especially for Turkish-Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat. If no concrete decision comes out of talks, it is likely that Talat will lose his chair at the elections in April. Columnist Sami Kohen in mainstream Milliyet notes a fundamental difference between the two sides: "Turkish Cypriots are targeting a loose federation system while Greek Cypriots are determined to have a centralized federation. No significance can come out as long as this fundamental difference remains."

Poll: Orthodox Turks Concerned of Their Security (Cumhuriyet)
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries a public opinion survey headlined "How non-Muslims live in Turkey, and what they want." The survey was conducted January 7-9 by Eurasia Public opinion Research Center (AKAM) through face-to-face interviews with 820 Orthodox citizens in the country. 66.6 percent of the respondents said they faced "discrimination," and 77 percent said they were concerned of their security, since they were non-Muslims. With regard to the Orthodox citizens' most important expectations from the Turkish government, 47.8 percent responded by saying "the reopening of Halki Seminary," 44.6 percent "the recognition of the Patriarchate's Ecumenism," and 5.2 percent "respect to our efforts to spread our religion."

Erdogan to Strengthen Ties with Moscow

In "Erdogan to Moscow in Search of Alliance" Hurriyet Daily News is reporting that Turkey and Russia will set up a strategic cooperation working group co-chaired at the prime ministerial level when PM Erdogan meets with PM Putin on Wednesday. Accompanied by five cabinet members and a group of businessmen, Hurriyet Daily News reports that talks will focus on strengthening energy and business ties and according to a Turkish official find "a mechanism to prevent any more crises and put the relations on a sound footing."

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

Prime Minister Erdogan goes to Russia on January 12. Energy will be the main issue on the agenda.

Prime Minister Erdogan said Turkey was "very close" to reaching a long-delayed deal with the IMF.

Foreign Minister Davutoglu is in the UK on an official visit to meet with his British counterpart Miliband. Davutoglu will deliver a speech at the King's College.

Prime Minister Erdogan will be given the King Faisal Award, known as

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the Nobel Prize of the Arab world.

CHP leader Baykal insists the popularity of AKP was declining, and urges PM Erdogan to reveal the results of the public opinion polls he was conducting.

The newly founded Kurdish party BDP will hold a convention February [11](#).

Italian PM Berlusconi returned to official duties a month after he was injured by an attacker in Milan.

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